



NASA Weekly Update

Week of June 12 - 17, 2006

6-17: NASA Gives 'Go' for Space Shuttle

Discovery's Launch: NASA senior managers on Saturday cleared the Space Shuttle Discovery for a July 1 flight to the International Space Station. The decision was announced after a lengthy Flight Readiness Review, a traditional meeting in which top NASA managers and engineers set launch dates,



the STS-121 crew poses for a photo at Launch Pad 39B on the top of the fixed service structure.

determine whether the shuttle's complex array of equipment, support systems and procedures are ready for flight and assess any risks associated with the mission. For more information on the STS-121 mission, including images and interviews with the crew, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/shuttle>.

6-16: NASA to Announce Answer to Black Hole

Paradox: Astronomers using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory for research are hosting a media teleconference at 1 p.m. EDT Wednesday, June 21, to explain how black holes light up the universe. Audio of the event will be streamed live on the Web at:

<http://www.nasa.gov/newsaudio>.

6-16: NASA Conference Celebrates 30 Years of Mars Research:

NASA will host a symposium titled "Mars: Past, Present and Future" on Thursday, June 22 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the agency's Langley Research Center, Hampton, Va. The event is part of NASA's Viking 30th Anniversary celebration. It will highlight the first successful soft landing on Mars by the Viking spacecraft. Speakers will include key participants in Viking and other NASA Mars missions. The event will be audio webcast. To view the Mars symposium agenda and hear the webcast, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/centers/langley>.

6-15: NASA Astronomical Observatory Passes

Hurdle: The world's largest airborne astronomical observatory has passed a technical and programmatic review that could potentially lead to the continuation of the mission. NASA's Program Management Council concluded that there were no insurmountable technical or programmatic challenges to the continued development of the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA). The agency has developed a technically viable plan to proceed with the development of the SOFIA aircraft, subject to the identification of appropriate funding offsets.

6-14: NASA Technology Aids Water Purification

Effort in Iraq: NASA engineers, who are used to making a difference in the lives of astronauts in space, recently had the chance to improve the lives of villagers in Iraq by using NASA technology. Volunteering their own time, engineers at the agency's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., helped install and test a water purification system in the northern village of Kendala. For information about NASA's Environmental Controls and Life Support System, visit:

http://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/pdf/104840main_eclss.pdf.

6-13: NASA Releases Genesis Accident Report:

NASA has posted the Genesis Mission Mishap Investigation Board Report on the agency's Web site. The report details the findings of the (*cont'd on pg. 2*)

15-member board that investigated why the drogue parachute and parafoil systems failed to properly deploy and slow the Genesis Sample Return Capsule during re-entry. With nothing to slow its descent, the capsule crashed into the Utah desert landing zone on September 8, 2004. The Genesis Mishap Investigation Board Report is available at:
<http://www.nasa.gov/genesis>.

Weekly Status Reports



The International Space Station crew this week prepared for the exchange of unpiloted Progress cargo carriers and for the next shuttle mission, which will deliver an additional crew member. Expedition 13 Commander Pavel Vinogradov and Flight Engineer Jeff Williams will welcome European Space Agency astronaut Thomas Reiter, giving the station a third crew member for the first time since May 2003. Space Shuttle Discovery is scheduled to launch to the station no earlier than July 1.

Discovery will bring equipment and supplies to the station, much of it in the multi-purpose logistics module known as Leonardo. The Italian-built pressurized transporter will be taken from Discovery's cargo bay and attached to the station's Unity module, where it will be unloaded and later refilled with equipment, experiment results, other items and trash for return to Earth. On Wednesday, Vinogradov and Williams trained for a photo session during Discovery's predocking maneuver. The orbiter does a back flip near the station to expose its belly to camera-wielding station crew members. The images are sent to Earth for examination to check for any damage to thermal protection tiles. Crew members also spent some time this week packing material for return to Earth on Discovery.

The next station status report will be issued on Friday, June 23. For more about the crew's activities and station sighting opportunities, visit:
<http://www.nasa.gov/station>.



STEREO (Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory)
Launch Pad: 17-B, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station
Launch Vehicle: Boeing Delta II
Launch Date: July 22, 2006
Launch Times: 3:11 - 3:13 p.m. or 4:19 - 4:34 p.m. EDT

At the Astrotech Space Operations Facility, testing and prelaunch processing of STEREO continues. Communications testing with the Deep Space Network continues. On observatory "A" on Wednesday, the Heliospheric Imager vertical instrument door was successfully deployed during testing. On observatory "B," the scientific instruments were aligned and tested. Comprehensive performance testing of both observatories continues to go well. STEREO is planned to be transported to Launch Complex 17 on July 11 to be mated to the Boeing Delta II rocket.

The first stage of the Delta II rocket at Pad 17-B was erected on June 2. The first of three sets of three solid rocket boosters was attached on June 5. A fourth solid rocket booster is set to be attached on Saturday. Following this, no further work on the launch vehicle is scheduled until after a U.S. Air Force launch next week on adjacent Pad 17-A. For information about the STEREO mission, visit:
<http://www.nasa.gov/stereo>.



--June 22, 10 am - 5 pm: *The Vision for Space Exploration: From Vision to Reality*. An interactive, all-day exhibit in the Rayburn Foyer with a reception to follow from 5 pm - 7 pm, also in the Rayburn Foyer. The event is open to all Members and staff.
--July 1: Launch of Space Shuttle Discovery, STS-121
--July 20: Mars Viking Anniversary Event in the Rayburn Foyer.

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